

## Message Text

SECRET

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15

ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ADP-00 EB-11 SS-14 NSC-10 CIAE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY COTONOU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4981

INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS

S E C R E T COTONOU 0389

NOFORN

E. O. 11652: XGDS1 NOFORN

TAGS: PFOR, DM, FR

SUBJ: FRENCH- DAHOMEAN RELATIONS

1. THE MRGD IS DETERMINED TO GAIN ITS ECONOMIC AND PSYCHOLOGICAL INDEPENDENCE FROM FRANCE. TO THIS END, ACCORDING TO A VERY SENSITIVE REPORT SHOWN TO ME BY THE FRENCH, IT WILL TAKE ITS DISTANCE FROM FRANCE FOR THE NEXT SIX MONTHS, AFTER WHICH IT WILL SEEK FRIENDLY RELATIONS OF A LESS PRIVILEGED, NEVERTHELESS CLOSE NATURE. BUDGETARY SUPPORT FROM FRANCE WILL NOT BE SOUGHT, FRENCH DECISION MAKING WITHIN THE MRGD WILL END AND FRENCH BUSINESS WILL BE REQUIRED TO RESPECT INVESTMENT, TAX AND OTHER LAWS WHICH THEY HAVE THUS FAR IGNORED.

2. WHILE THERE WILL BE OCCASIONAL GOVERNMENT- INSPIRED PUBLIC CRITICISM DIRECTED PRINCIPALLY AT FRENCH COMMERCIAL AND ECONOMIC INTERESTS IN DAHOMEY, WE DO NOT FORESEE A HOSTILE, BRAZZAVILLE- TYPE CAMPAIGN DESIGNED TO STRAIN UNDULY RELATIONS WITH FRANCE. FOR EXAMPLE, THERE WAS NO PUBLICITY ON THE MARCH 10 EXPULSION OF THE CHIEF SURGEON AT THE COTONOU HOSPITAL, A FRENCH COLONEL, ON 24 HOURS NOTICE. NOR WILL THERE BE ANY PUBLICITY ON THE PREMATURE DEPARTURE OF THE FRENCH QUARTERMASTER OF THE DAHOMEAN ARMED SERVICES. FRENCH AMBASSADOR VAN GREVENYNGHE IS IN FULL ACCORD WITH THE REMOVAL OF THESE OFFICERS AS THEY HAVE REFUSED TO RECOGNIZE THEY WERE HERE AS ADVISORS, NOT DIRECTORS. IN THIS CONNECTION, VAN GREVENYNGHE TELLS ME HE IS IN THE PROCESS OF WEEDING OUT THOSE

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" COLONIAL THINKERS" IN HIS EMBASSY, IN THE FAC AND EVEN IN THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY WHO REFUSE TO CHANGE WITH THE TIMES.

3. FRENCH AMBASSADOR IS PERSUADED THAT FRENCH PATIENCE AND REASONABLENESS DURING THE COMING MONTHS SHOULD LEAD TO A MORE NORMAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FRANCE AND DAHOMEY, AND THAT THE FORMER " SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP" WITH THIS SMALL COUNTRY IS NOT WORTH THE PRICE EVEN IF IT COULD BE MAINTAINED. AS RELATIONS ARE PUT ON A HEALTHY, BUSINESSLIKE LEVEL OF MUTUAL RESPECT, HE SEES FRENCH PRESENCE IN HARMONY WITH DAHOMEY' S POLITICAL ASPIRATIONS AND THEREFORE AN IMPORTANT AND HOPEFULLY WELCOME CONTRIBUTION TO THE COUNTRY' S SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.  
ANDERSON

SECRET

\*\*\* Current Handling Restrictions \*\*\* n/a

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